

Message Text

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PAGE 01 TOKYO 12991 180938Z
ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03
NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11 AID-05
COME-00 EB-08 FRB-03 TRSE-00 XMB-02 OPIC-03
LAB-04 SIL-01 OMB-01 ACDA-12 DOTE-00 FMC-01 CG-00
DLOS-09 OES-09 /124 W
-----068669 181126Z /20

P 180906Z JUL 78
FM AMEMBASSY TOKYO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9698
INFO AMEMBASSY MANILA PRIORITY
AMCONSUL FUKUOKA
SECDEF WASHDC
CINCPAC HONOLULU HI
COMNAVFORJA YOKOSUKA JA
CHJUSMAG MANILA RP
COMSEVENTHFLT
CINCPACXHT PEARL HARBOR HI
CNO WASHDC
COMUSJAPAN YOKOTA AB JA

C O N F I D E N T I A L TOKYO 12991

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MASS, SOPN, JA, US
SUBJECT: JAPANESE PRESS EXPLORIES ON PHILIPPINE SHIPS

REF: (A) CJUSMAG MANILA 170626Z JUL 78, (B) TOKYO 11665
DTG 270752 JUN 78

1. JULY 18 MORNING PRESS CARRIED JIJI STORY DATED
MANILA JULY 17 THAT PHILIPPINE NEWS AGENCY HAD ANNOUNCED
THAT PHILIPPINE NAVY HAD TAKEN DELIVERY OF 12 LSTS WHICH
IT HAD ORDERED FROM JAPAN. STORIES HAVE BEEN PLAYED AS
FOLLOW-ONS TO CONTROVERSY WHICH SURFACED LAST WEEKEND
CONCERNING FUJI INDUSTRIES MANUFACTURING PINS FOR HAND
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PAGE 02 TOKYO 12991 180938Z

GRENADES FOR SALE TO PHILIPPINE DEFENSE MINISTRY. STORIES
NOTED THAT IT WAS IMPOSSIBLE TO DETERMINE VALIDITY OF
PNA REPORT BUT THAT IF IT WERE TRUE IT WOULD SURELY
KINDLE MAJOR CONTROVERSY OVER ARMS EXPORTS IN JAPAN.
LATER JIJI STORY, ALSO REPORTED WIDELY, NOTED THAT
PHILIPPINE NAVY HAD STATED THAT SHIPS WERE TO BE USED IN
CONJUNCTION WITH GOP'S REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

PROGRAM AND THAT WHILE SHIPS WERE DELIVERED FROM JAPAN THEY HAD BEEN OBTAINED FROM US NAVY AND THEIR DELIVERY TO THE PHILIPPINE NAVY DID NOT RUN COUNTER TO THE JAPANESE GOVERNMENT'S POLICY OF PROHIBITING ARMS EXPORTS.

2. EMOFF CONTACTED MOFA SECOND SE ASIA DIVISION CONCERNING GOJ REACTION TO PRESS REPORTS. MOFA OFFICER SAID THAT MINISTRY WOULD RESPOND FACTUALLY TO PRESS QUERIES STATING THAT EXPORT OF LSTS WAS IN ACCORD WITH EXISTING POLICY; HE NOTED THAT MOFA DOES NOT EXPECT STORY TO BECOME MAJOR ISSUE.

3. EMBASSY PROPOSES TO USE FOLLOWING PRESS GUIDANCE IF ASKED. QUERIES CONCERNING PREVIOUS STATUS OF LSTS: "THE US GOVERNMENT UNDER FOREIGN MILITARY SALES (FMS) PROCEDURES HAS PROVIDED THE GOVERNMENT OF PHILIPPINES 10 LSTS WHICH FORMERLY WERE OPERATED BY THE UNITED STATES NAVY'S MILITARY SEALIFT COMMAND. THE AGREEMENT CONCERNING THIS TRANSACTION WAS CONCLUDED SEPTEMBER 13, 1976 WHEN THE PHILIPPINE NAVY SIGNED A LETTER OF OFFER AND ACCEPTANCE (LOA) WITH THE US NAVY. IT IS OUR UNDERSTANDING THAT THESE SHIPS WERE TO RECEIVE MINOR REPAIRS AND INSPECTIONS FOR SEAWORTHINESS AT JAPANESE COMMERCIAL SHIPYARDS PRIOR TO PROCEEDING TO THE PHILIPPINES."

IF PRESSED CONCERNING DISCREPANCY OF NUMBERS BETWEEN
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PAGE 03 TOKYO 12991 180938Z

PHILIPPINE ANNOUNCEMENT AND ABOVE RESPONSE WE WOULD RESPOND: "THE US GOVERNMENT HAS FROM TIME TO TIME SOLD OR TRANSFERRED TO THE GOVERNMENT OF THE PHILIPPINES OTHER SHIPS AND CRAFT UNDER FMS PROCEDURES AND THE MILITARY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (MAP). SOME OF THESE SHIPS AND CRAFT WERE PHYSICALLY LOCATED IN JAPAN AT THE TIME OF THEIR TRANSFER AND MAY BE INCLUDED IN THE TOTAL IN THE PHILIPPINE NEWS AGENCY ANNOUNCEMENT."

IF ASKED CONCERNING TOTAL NUMBERS AND/OR TYPE OF SHIPS INVOLVED IN US/GOP TRANSFERS WE WOULD SAY: "THE EMBASSY DOES NOT MAINTAIN INFORMATION CONCERNING THE TOTAL NUMBER OF US-GOP FMS/MAP TRANSACTIONS."

4. FYI: PNA ANNOUNCEMENT MENTIONED "12 LSTS" WHICH MAY IN FACT REFER TO THE 10 LSTS PLUS TWO DE'S (EX-AMICK AND EX-ATHERTON) WHICH WERE INCLUDED IN SAME LOA. UNLESS ASKED DIRECTLY ABOUT EXISTENCE OF DE'S WE WOULD PREFER TO AVOID THEIR COMING TO PRESS ATTENTION AS THIS MIGHT PREJUDICE ONGOING ARRANGEMENTS CONCERNING REPAIR/DEPARTURE FROM JAPAN.

5. EMBASSY WOULD WELCOME COMMENTS BY ADDRESSEES CONCERNING PROPOSED GUIDANCE. MANSFIELD

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: SHIPS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 18 jul 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978TOKYO12991
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780294-0476
Format: TEL
From: TOKYO
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780745/aaaabmeu.tel
Line Count: 118
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 8cc64271-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 78 TOKYO 11665
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 09 may 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1963720
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: JAPANESE PRESS EXPLORIES ON PHILIPPINE SHIPS
TAGS: MASS, SOPN, JA, US
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/8cc64271-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014